

of a schoolhouse stabbing, Han Han wrote on his blog: "Wretched children, it is you who are poisoned by milk powder, harmed by vaccines, crushed by earthquakes, and burned in fires.... I hope that when you grow up, you will not only protect your own children but build a society that protects everyone's children."



87

MOZAH BINT NASSER AL-MISSNED

for championing education in the Arab world.

First lady | Qatar

If the Middle East ever sheds its reputation as an education backwater more reliant on hydrocarbons than human capital, Sheikha Moza—or simply "The Sheikha," as she's known in Doha—will have had much to do with it. The second and savviest of the three wives of the emir of the tiny, gas-rich Persian Gulf state of Qatar, her highness is on a mission to transform learning in a region that suffers from one of the world's highest rates of adult illiteracy. For the last decade, the sheikha and her foundation have been building Doha's ambitious, \$8.25 billion "Education City." She recruited six U.S. universities

to set up satellite campuses there, including Georgetown and Carnegie Mellon, and brought in the Rand Corp. to revamp the country's K-12 education system from top to bottom. Meanwhile, investors have poured \$100 million into a science park meant to boost Qatar's engineer class. "Ignorance," the sheikha told the United Nations in 2009, "is by far the biggest danger and threat to humankind."

88

DARON ACEMOGLU

for showing that freedom is about more than markets.

Economist, MIT
Cambridge, Mass.



Some Nobel Prize selections are a genuine surprise. The same won't be true if Daron Acemoglu,

already at age 43 one of the world's 20 most cited economists, eventually takes the award. Born in Turkey and educated at the London School of Economics, Acemoglu quickly made a name for himself with papers and monographs that examined how economic incentives align with political life. His specialty is the analysis of the political conditions under which markets thrive—namely, democracy. It's a theme Acemoglu has explored in a steady stream of academic papers, textbooks, and op-eds—work that so impressed his peers that he won the John Bates Clark medal in 2005, given annually to an outstanding economist under age 40. Acemoglu's next book, co-authored with Harvard University's James Robinson, *Why Do Nations Fail?*, argues that a real "freedom agenda" will start with democratic rules rather than free markets. "You would not need armies to implement such a scheme," Acemoglu said, "just a functioning bureaucracy."

READING LIST: *13 Bankers*, by Simon Johnson and James

Kwak; *The Party*, by Richard McGregor; *How Rome Fell*, by Adrian Goldsworthy.

BEST IDEA: David Cameron and George Osborne's idea of cutting middle-class (upper-middle-class) benefits in Britain.

WORST IDEA: That authoritarian regimes are good for growth. A close second: the United Nations' idea of establishing the UNESCO-Biaso prize for research, named after Equatorial Guinea's kleptocratic dictator.

CHINA OR INDIA? India.

KINDLE OR IPAD? iPad, though I still have to buy mine.

89

DAVID GROSSMAN

for using fiction to tell the truth about Israel's open wounds.

Novelist | Israel



In David Grossman's latest novel, *To the End of the Land*, a woman wanders the length of Israel

trying to flee what she fears will be news that her soldier son has been killed in combat: "This is possible," she thinks. "It is in her power, and in fact it is the only thing that is possible for her, the only thing that is in her power."

Coming as it does during a Mideast peace process that is making a mockery of the name and a hard-line ascendancy in Israeli electoral politics, Grossman's book—finished after his own soldier son, Uri, was killed by an anti-tank missile in Lebanon and published this year in English—sounds a sad cry for his country's future. This year Grossman was also vocal against the botched Gaza flotilla raid in May and attended weekly demonstrations against evictions of Palestinian residents in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, where he was manhandled by the police. "The great temptation is not to expose yourself to these atrocities," he told the *Guardian*. "But if you do that, you've lost the war."

90

MARTHA NUSSBAUM

for reminding us what we lose in the rush for global competitiveness.

Philosopher, University of Chicago | Chicago



These are perilous times for liberal humanists like philosopher Martha Nussbaum, who find their craft

besieged from all sides: by metrics-minded education reformers, by pundits and politicians fretting about U.S. competitiveness in the sciences and engineering, by university administrators faced with budget cuts and shrinking endowments, wondering whether they really need that historian of early Guatemalan kilns on the payroll.

Nussbaum, an eclectic scholar whose last book explored the theme of disgust as it related to the gay-marriage debate, thinks that they do. The liberal arts, Nussbaum argues in her latest book, *Not for Profit*, are essential to the development of empathy, tolerance, and critical thinking, traits and skills that don't translate easily into numbers but that are crucial for society. In the rush to retool the American education system in the image of an ever-more-cuthroat global economy, she worries, "values precious for the future of democracy ... are in danger of getting lost."

READING LIST: *The Way We Live Now*, Anthony Trollope; *The Religion of Man*, Rabindranath Tagore; *Ulysses*, James Joyce.

CHINA OR INDIA? India!!

KINDLE OR IPAD? Neither.

91

EDWIGE DANTICAT

for affirming the moral necessity of art, even in the worst of circumstances.

Writer | Miami

It was a surreal year for Haitian writers abroad. On top of the trauma of Jan. 12's earthquake,